

Claims

- [c1] A method of promoting and playing a motion picture at a theater comprising:
- promoting the motion picture in a manner that communicates to a prospective patron that:
 - the motion picture is not scheduled to begin at the theater at any particular time;
 - the prospective patron may visit the theater when convenient for the prospective patron;
 - and the motion picture will begin shortly after the prospective patron arrives at the theater;
 - and begin playing the motion picture within no more than a pre-determined time period after a visiting patron arrives at the theater.
- [c2] The method of claim [c1] wherein the promoting is in a manner that also communicates to the prospective patron that the prospective patron must arrive at the theater within a time frame.
- [c3] The method of [c2] wherein the time frame is defined by two stated times.
- [c4] The method of [c1] wherein the promoting is in a manner that also communicates to the prospective patron that the motion picture will begin within no more than a stated time period after the prospective patron arrives at the theater.

- [c5] The method of [c1] wherein the motion picture begins to play at the earlier of the following:
the pre-determined time period after the visiting patron arrives at the theater; or
when a pre-determined level of visiting patrons at the theater has been reached.
- [c6] A method of playing a motion picture at a theater to a plurality of patrons comprising beginning the motion picture at the earlier of the following:
a pre-determined time period after the first patron arrives at the theater; or
when a pre-determined level of the patrons at the theater has been reached.
- [c7] The method of [c6] wherein the pre-determined level is a function of the time of day.
- [c8] The method of [c6] wherein the pre-determined time period is a function of the time of day.
- [c9] The method of [c6] wherein the pre-determined level is a function of the popularity of the motion picture.
- [c10] The method of [c6] wherein the pre-determined time period is a function of the popularity of the motion picture.
- [c11] The method of [c6] wherein:

the theater is in a complex of theaters; and
the pre-determined level is a function of the number of theaters in
the complex.

- [c12] The method of [c6] wherein:
the theater is in a complex of theaters; and
the pre-determined time period is a function of the number of
theaters in the complex.
- [c13] A system for playing a motion picture at a theater to a plurality of
patrons comprising:
a projector for projecting the motion picture in the theater; and
a processing system configured to cause the projector to begin
projecting the motion picture a pre-determined time period after
the first of the plurality of patrons arrives at the theater.
- [c14] The system of [c13] wherein the processing system is further
configured to cause the projector to begin playing the motion
picture when a pre-determined level of patrons at the theater is
reached, if earlier than the pre-determined time period after the
first of the plurality of patrons arrives at the theater.
- [c15] The system of [c14] wherein the pre-determined level is a
function of the time of day.
- [c16] The system of [c14] wherein the pre-determined time period is a
function of the time of day.

- [c17] The system of [c14] wherein the pre-determined level is a function of the popularity of the motion picture.
- [c18] The system of [c14] wherein the pre-determined time period is a function of the popularity of the motion picture.
- [c19] The system of [c14] wherein:
the theater is in a complex of theaters; and
the pre-determined level is a function of the number of theaters in the complex.
- [c20] The system of [c14] wherein:
the theater is in a complex of theaters; and
the pre-determined time period is a function of the number of theaters in the complex.
- [c21] The system of [c13] further comprising an input system configured to receive and communicate information indicative of the arrival of at least the first of the plurality of patrons and wherein the processing system is further configured to receive the information from the input system and to use the information in determining when to cause the projector to begin projecting the motion picture.
- [c22] The system of [c13] further comprising a timing system configured to determine when the predetermined time period has elapsed.

[c23] A method of playing a plurality of different motion pictures in a complex containing a plurality of theaters comprising:
receiving a selection of a motion picture from a patron that visits the complex that the patron wishes to see;
determining which theater will play the motion picture selected by the patron after receiving the selection;
directing the patron to the theater that has been determined to play the selected motion picture; and
playing the selected motion picture at the theater that has been determined to play the selected motion picture.

[c24] A system for playing a plurality of different motion pictures in a complex containing a plurality of theaters comprising:
a plurality of motion picture projectors, each located in a different one of the theaters;
a network communication system;
an electronic storage system configured to store the motion pictures; and
a processing system configured to:
select one of the motion pictures from the electronic storage system in response to at least one request to see that motion picture by a patron that has visited the complex; and
cause that selected motion picture to be downloaded over the network to one of the projectors.

[c25] The system of [c24] wherein the processing system is also

configured to cause the selected motion picture to begin playing within no more than a pre-determined time period after the visiting patron arrives at the theater.

[c26] A method of constructing and operating a motion picture theater complex comprising:
purchasing or renting a plurality of neighboring offices, apartments or condominiums in a building;
installing a motion picture projector, a motion picture screen or display and a plurality of chairs facing the screen or display in each office, apartment or condominium without altering the size of any of the offices or apartments;
selling tickets to see motion pictures in the offices, apartments or condominiums;
directing patrons to the offices, apartments or condominiums to see the motion pictures that the patrons wish to see; and
playing motion pictures in the offices, apartments or condominiums.

[c27] The method of [c26] wherein each office, apartment or condominium is adapted to be readily converted to at least one revenue-generating function other than the showing of motion pictures.

[c28] The method of [c27] further comprising switching the revenue-generating function of at least one of the offices, apartments or condominiums to the revenue-generating function that appears to

generate the greatest profit.